



Light
Regional
Council

Public Relations and Marketing Policy

Reference Number:
Responsible Department:
Related Policy/Procedure:

Section 6 No. 4
Business & Governance
2.02 Code of Conduct for Council Members
2.04 Code of Conduct for Council Employees
6.06 Website Standards
6.16 Social Media Policy
6.17 Social Media Procedures
6.20 Council Members Record Management Policy
21 October 2013
September 2020
2020/163
Amendment No. 2
Local Government Act, 1999
Code of Conduct for Council Members
Code of Conduct for Council Employees
September 2022
Biennially

Date of Adoption:
Current Review Date:
Minute Reference:
Version Number:
Applicable Legislation:

Next Review Date:
Review Frequency:

1. Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that a proper procedure is in place for Council's external communications and management of media-related issues.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy will apply to Council's elected members, staff, contractors and agents and consultants on behalf of Council.
- 2.2. All Council publications, documents and information (printed and electronic) – both external and internal
- 2.3. Council's designated spokespersons are the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer, unless otherwise directed.
- 2.4. No media comment is to be made by staff without consent or direction from the Chief Executive Officer. It is to be noted that some council staff may, by virtue of their designated roles and responsibilities within the organisation, will have such consent and direction implied within their employment position statements by virtue of the need to communicate with the public through the media (print, radio and other electronic forms), which may include forms of social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc.), in order to undertake their position responsibilities and to progress Council's objectives and business plans.
- 2.5. It is acknowledged that from time to time elected members may be contacted directly by the media for comment on council business matters. If requested, a council member's comment should reflect the adopted council position if a position has been adopted. Otherwise any comment provided should be stated as being the opinion of the individual elected member only.

3. Policy Aims

The aim of this policy is to ensure:

- 3.1 accurate, timely and consistent information is provided to the media;
- 3.2 The most qualified and appropriate spokesperson and/or sources of information at Council are identified;
- 3.3 Council maintains pro-active communications and an open working relationship with media in managing issues and minimising negative impacts.
- 3.4 issues are monitored and handled in an appropriate manner;
- 3.5 Council's integrity and professional image is preserved;
- 3.6 All Council publications, documents and printed information – both external and internal – are presented in a consistent format to ensure continuity and enhance recognition and understanding of Council publications and documents.

4. Policy Details:

Procedures

The following steps will be taken by Council to fulfil the requirements of this policy:

Subject to Clause 2, all media and external communications are to be addressed firstly to the Chief Executive Officer who will promptly liaise with the Mayor, subject to the nature and importance of the issue. If any staff or elected member of Council is contacted or likely to be in contact with the media or believes an issue may have broader ramifications, they should contact the Chief Executive Officer directly.

Roles and Responsibilities

- 4.1 The Chief Executive Officer of Council is responsible for:
 - Implementing this policy.
 - Reporting on Council's success in meeting objectives of this policy.
 - Reporting on the review and evaluation of this policy.
- 4.2 All council members, staff, contractors and agents and consultants acting on behalf of Council take responsibility for their actions by:
 - Considering the public ramifications of their actions/communications at all times.
 - Identifying potential risks of Council-related issues, as well as identifying opportunities for positive promotion. Council's Chief Executive Officer should be advised of these issues for consideration/action.
 - Maintaining high levels of consistent internal communications within the Council, including contractors, agents and consultants.

4.3 Media Enquiries

The following procedures must be undertaken in response to any media enquiry:

- 4.3.1 All media queries must be dealt with by the Chief Executive Officer or a staff member who is authorised to do so regarding the particular matter at hand.
- 4.3.2 In the event that a Council staff member is contacted directly by the media, and does not have consent or direction from the Chief Executive Officer to deal with the request, a message must be taken and forwarded to the Chief Executive Officer to determine an appropriate response.
- 4.3.3 Media queries are to be followed up immediately and assessed as to their importance with, in most cases, the Chief Executive Officer or delegate contacting the media involved.
- 4.3.4 The Mayor and Chief Executive Officer are to be advised of all media queries. Where appropriate, it may also be appropriate to inform Councillors of media interactions.

4.4 Media Statements

The following procedures must be undertaken when providing any media with a prepared statement:

- 4.4.1 Any public comment or statements on behalf of Council likely to be reported must be cleared by the Mayor, Chief Executive Officer or another authorised staff member (see clause 2).
- 4.4.2 Where necessary, a written media statement will be prepared in response to a major issue to ensure members of the media are given the correct message.
- 4.4.3 With reference to clauses 2, 4.4.1 and 4.4.2, no unauthorised written material claiming to represent the Council is to be forwarded to the media.,.

4.5 Media Releases

All media releases – whether prepared internally by other Council staff or externally by a consultant – are to be prepared in accordance with clause 4.4 of this policy, prior to being issued to the media.

4.6 Media Opportunities

It is Council's policy to build a positive working relationship with the media and broader community. Staff and council members are therefore encouraged to contact the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer on any communications issues or positive media opportunities.

4.7 Website and other marketing material

It is essential that all external communication from Council is consistent in content and appearance and is to follow Council's Corporate Style Guide. All printed and electronic marketing material, including material published on Council's website and forms of social media must be cleared through the Chief Executive Officer or authorised council officer (see clause 2).

4.8 Social Media

See Policy 6.16 – Social Media Policy and Procedure 6.17 – Social Media Procedures

4.9 Paid Advertorials

Any requests for media advertising/advertorials, aside from Council's regular advertising program are to be directed to the Chief Executive Officer or the departmental General Manager (if appropriate), for consideration. A decision on advertising will be based on the following criteria:

4.9.1 The value to Council residents of advertising.

4.9.2 The relevance of the target audience and anticipated effectiveness of the advertising.

4.9.3 The cost and whether Council's annual marketing budget allows for level of cost.

4.10 Format guidelines for all printed Council information/documentation for Public Relations and Marketing

To ensure consistency of information, all printed Council documents and information must follow Council's Corporate Style Guide. If documents or collateral is being created by an external supplier a copy of the Corporate Style Guide must be sent to the supplier.

5. References

Code of Conduct for Council Members

Code of Conduct for Council Employees

Social Media Policy

Council Member Records Management Policy

Website Standards

Public Notice Media Advertising Procedure

Corporate Style Guide

6. Review and re-evaluation

In order to ensure Council continues to provide the best possible internal review of council decisions for its customers, this policy will be subject to evaluation and review within 12 months of a Council election.

7. Policy History

1. Policy adopted by Council on 21 October 2003, Minute Reference 15.2.3 Page 2003/431
2. Policy adopted by Council on 22 September 2015, Minute Reference GAP9.2.8/2015 Page 2015/332
3. Policy adopted by Council on 22 September 2020, Minute Reference GAP9.2.2/2020, Page Reference 2020/163